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ABSTRACT

This book follows the experiences of a group of young African Caribbean British women as they leave school to enter the world of work, in an attempt to understand processes of inequality. Study methodology included a longitudinal survey approach and a school-based ethnography. The study population consisted of 62 young women aged 15 to 19 years who attended 2 comprehensive schools in south London and who were from working-class backgrounds, and 198 of their black and white male and female peers. The subjects answered questionnaires, and were interviewed and observed in their homes and classrooms over a period of 18 months. In addition, 30 young women from a school in Trinidad (aged 16 and 18 years) participated in semistructured interviews concerning their career choices and attitudes toward marriage and relationships. The book's chapters are divided according to presentation of the study; and comparative consideration of the central arguments within social and educational research, race relations, and feminist thought. Findings of the study suggest that these women do well at school; contribute to society; are good, efficient workers; and yet, as a group, consistently fail to secure the economic status and occupational prestige they deserve. A major constraint was a racially and sexually segregated labor market, which ensured limited occupational opportunities open to young black women. Notes accompany each chapter. Included are over 400 references. (JB)

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